

PHILETUS to EUSEBES.

A

L E T T E R

From a SON to a FATHER,

In ANSWER to

EUSEBES'S 14th Letter on *Baptism*.

Published by

The Rev. STEPHEN ADDINGTON.

Which is here inserted for the Satisfaction of the Reader.

“ Teach us what we shall do unto the child,” *Judg.* xiii. 8.

“ And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a

“ Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards

“ Man,” *Acts* xxiv. 16.

THE SECOND EDITION.



L O N D O N :

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EUSEBES TO PHILETUS.

On Baptism.

I Congratulate you, Philetus, on the deliverance which a good God has lately granted to the dear companion of your life, and the addition he has made to her joys and your own in the child he has graciously given you. May you be long happy in one another and in your offspring, and be enabled to make the proper acknowledgment and improvement of this and every other mercy! You will, I trust, consider this gracious and seasonable appearance of divine providence as an additional obligation to yield yourself unto God, and employ every talent with encreasing diligence, in his service. And, being the Lord's yourself, you cannot but be desirous that your little-one may be his likewise.

Take the first opportunity of presenting it to God, and of asking for it, in the name of Jesus, the blessings of his covenant. The infant-seed [of his people were, by his appointment, in very early ages of the church, taken into covenant with God, together with their parents. You may look back with great pleasure in this view upon such promises as that which he made to his servant Noah, "I will establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you." And that to Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." He ordered circumcision as an external token of this his covenant-favour. "Every man-child among you shall be circumcised, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and thee."

The privileges of this covenant were indeed more immediately appropriated to the seed of Abraham. But it appears, both from sacred and uninspired writers, that proselytes from heathenism, upon submitting to this rite, and being baptized,

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were admitted to a part with them, if they brought the sacrifices appointed. The custom of baptizing these proselytes continued in the church until the time of our Saviour. And as those of their children that were born before the conversion of their parents were baptized with them, the apostles would very naturally conclude that their divine Master meant to include them in his commission to disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And the rather, as they had seen him receiving little children with the utmost tenderness and affection; like the good Shepherd gathering these lambs in his arms, and carrying them in his bosom; and had heard him recommending to his followers the like condescension and good-will towards them. If they had been commanded to circumcise all nations, there can be no doubt but they would have circumcised children, because they had been usually admitted to that rite before; and why not baptize them for the same reason? There could be no impropriety in applying this seal or token of God's covenant to children, as that which Paul calls a seal of the righteousness of faith, had been applied to them by divine appointment ever since the days of Abraham; especially as baptism is, according to Paul's representation of it in his epistle to the christians at Colosse, (chap. ii. ver. 11, 12.) the circumcision of Christ, or the christian circumcision. The covenant of God with believers has been the same in all ages; and we have surely good reason to hope that he will be a God to them and to their seed, in as extensive a sense now as he was before the establishment of christianity. Indeed Peter expressly assured the christian converts in his day, that the promise was to them and to their children. While they continued in infidelity themselves their children were unclean, and could not be admitted to an ordinance which necessarily supposes that those parents are christians themselves who dedicate their children to God in it. Yet, upon their conversion, their children were holy, so far as to have a right to that ordinance by which they were introduced among the followers of the holy Jesus. This seems the most natural interpretation of those words of Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 14. His reasoning is to the same purpose in Rom. xi. 16.

"If the root be holy so are the branches." And the apostles first appointed to administer the ordinances of the gospel, seem to have acted upon this maxim in baptizing whole households, in which it is the more probable that the children were included, as no mention is made of their baptizing adult persons, whose parents were christians, in all the New-Testament, though it contains the history of about threescore years after the time of our Saviour. Hence I trust you will think it highly reasonable and becoming to dedicate your child to the Lord in the ordinance of baptism; and the rather as you cannot but be sensible that such a solemn transaction may and ought to be improved to very valuable purposes. For though it avail not to the putting-away the filth of the flesh, or the renovation of the heart, it may tend I hope to animate your prayers to God for your offspring, that you have thus committed and consecrated it to him, and engage you to leave it cheerfully with him, and to the wise disposals of his providence. You hereby likewise lay yourself under very solemn obligations to train it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: And not only may, but ought, to improve the remembrance of this religious transaction as an argument with your offspring, in future years, to walk in newness of life, and to confirm their baptismal engagements by devoting themselves faithfully and entirely to the Lord; having been thus given up to him in early life by those who were most affectionately concerned for their spiritual and eternal good.

The use of water in this ordinance, compared with several representations of its nature and design in the word of God, naturally leads us to consider it as an emblem and memento of that internal and spiritual purity which is essential to the christian character. For my part, I lay no great stress upon the mode in which it is administered, because I apprehend that the great Head of the christian church never intended that his disciples should. Yet I cannot but prefer the manner of applying water to the subject by sprinkling or pouring. If ever the immersion of the whole body was used in the east, it would, in many circumstances, be burdensome and hazardous both to subjects and ministers in these northern climates; nay, according to the sense and usage of our country and times, it

appears rather an indecency. And we well know that Jesus himself always preserved the strictest decorum, made candid concessions, in matters of indifference, to the customs of the people among whom he lived ; and always discovered and recommended the tenderest regard to the lives and health of all men.

I mention these as reasons for our dispensing with the immersion of the body, supposing that to have been the prevailing custom in Judea, in the first ages of christianity. But many things urged to prove the antiquity and divine authority of that mode of baptizing appear to me utterly inconclusive. There is no more reason for supposing that the Eunuch, for instance, went with Philip into the water, than that our Saviour went into the mountain that he might from thence teach the multitude. The word is (εἰς) the same in both places. There and in many other passages nothing more could be meant by it than unto. As when our Lord says, (Matt. xv. 24.) "I am not sent but (εἰς) unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and (chap. xvii. 17.) "bring him hither to me (εἰς) &c. &c." But still more defective is the proof from thence of the Eunuch's being immersed in it. They were obliged to go down to the water-side that he might be baptized by sprinkling or pouring water upon him, unless they had been provided with a proper vessel for bringing up the water from the river; and their return from the river-side is naturally enough expressed by saying they came up from the water. It is said indeed, (Matt. iii. 6.) that many were baptized by John (ἐν) in Jordan. But must we conclude from thence that they were immersed in it? Within a few verses of that Jesus speaks of baptizing (ἐν) with the Holy Ghost and with fire—so we translate it; and should never think of rendering it in the Holy Ghost and in fire, though the Greek particle is the same in both places. Besides, more were baptized by the Apostles in a day than I should think, could have been baptized in that time by immersion; and many more than we can suppose provided with change of raiment: and it is highly incredible that they should immerse them naked, especially as the multitudes of these first converts consisted, it is expressly said, both of men and women. It is highly probable that the Jaylor and his family were baptized

in his house by night, where it is not to be thought that he had any place convenient for dipping. Indeed there seems to be frequent allusions, in the sacred scriptures, to the custom of sprinkling or pouring of water in baptism; particularly in that expression of Jesus which I mentioned before, "baptizing with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" and that in the epistle to the Hebrews, (chap. x. 22.) in which christians are spoken of as having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, namely, by those influences of God's holy Spirit, of which water, thus used in baptism, is a striking emblem. This Spirit is expressly promised as one of the great blessings of the Gospel-covenant in the same terms. "He (that is, the Messiah) shall sprinkle many nations;" and again, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." It is very certain that those Jewish washings were usually performed by sprinkling, which the writer to the Hebrews calls baptisms. Hence the seventy-two Greek translators of the Old Testament render that passage in which the descent of the dew upon Nebuchadnezzar is spoken of, "he was baptized (it is in our version he was wet) with the dew of heaven." Thus the Israelites were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, when the former distilled drops of rain upon them, and the waves of the latter, agitated by the winds, sprinkled them in their passage through it. And indeed the common expression of baptizing with water more naturally leads us to think of applying water to the body than the body to the water. But it is not my design to recite all the several arguments that have been urged in vindication of infant-baptism, or this mode of administering it. Much time has been spent in the controversy that might have been employed to far better purposes, and on subjects of much greater importance to the interest of religion, and the christian cause. Let your great concern be to approve yourself to God and your own conscience; and from a principle of love and subjection to the supreme Head of the christian church, and the tenderest and most faithful concern for your dear little-one, take the first opportunity to commit it to the special care of an indulgent providence, and the renewing influences of divine grace; desirous, above all things, that it may be interested in Christ and devoted to him; that it may be

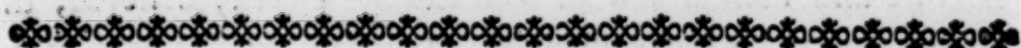
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his now, and his for ever. You will, I hope, likewise remember the obligations you are under, having thus given it up to the Lord, to watch over it with tenderness and care, to instruct it, as soon as it appears capable of instruction, in the things that concern its usefulness here and happiness hereafter. Give line upon line, and precept upon precept; and inforce every recommendation of virtue and piety by a steady adherence to the rules of both in your own conversation and behaviour.

Give me leave to recommend to your frequent and attentive perusal the Sermons of the late pious and learned Dr. Doddridge on the religious education of children, which contain many serious and pertinent advices upon this head. I wish you may always feel the weight of those arguments by which the excellent author has urged upon parents the several important duties of a religious education, and have wisdom and resolution to perform them. You may reasonably hope to find your own account in such a pious care of your offspring, and will be therein performing a service greatly needed, and of the utmost importance both to the rising generation and to the church of CHRIST.

I am, &c.

PHILETUS



PHILETUS to EUSEBES.

HONOURED SIR,

YOUR kind congratulation on the happy deliverance which a good God has lately granted to my dear companion in life, and the pleasing addition he has made to our mutual joys, I receive as a fresh token of your paternal affection; and your earnest concern that I may be enabled to make a proper acknowledgment and improvement of this and every other mercy, as additional obligations to yield myself unto God, and employ every talent with increasing diligence in his service, also discovers that pious spirit and temper I always found in you. I cannot forget, as it pleased God to bless with deep and lasting impressions your early and constant tenderness and care—your fervent prayers that were often watered with flowing tears, and unwearied instructions in the things that concerned my usefulness here and happiness hereafter—your giving me line upon line, and precept upon precept, and enforcing every recommendation of virtue and piety, by a steady adherence to the rules of both, in your own shining and exemplary conversation and behaviour, but must esteem a religious education as one of the greatest external privileges, and believe those who enjoy it, under a divine blessing, have much the advantage of others.

Now, Sir, as I find the bowels of a parent most affectionately concerned for the spiritual and eternal good of my dear babe, I have taken the first opportunity to commit and dedicate it to God in my most solemn addresses, earnestly asking for it, in the name of Jesus, the blessings of his covenant—that, above all things, it may be interested in and devoted to him—that it may be his now and his for ever. This I hope will be my constant concern, as I look on myself under very solemn obligations to watch over it with tenderness and care, and, as soon as possible, instruct and train it up in the
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nurture and admonition of the Lord. I verily believed, till lately, it was highly reasonable and becoming for parents to dedicate their infants to the Lord in the ordinance of baptism, and that it was a great privilege, and such who neglected it could not be properly concerned for their spiritual and eternal good ; and as to such who deny them baptism or that sprinkling is baptism, I looked on them as a very weak, ignorant, bigotted, and deluded people, destitute of natural affections towards their little ones, and their way of dipping strange, burdensome, dangerous and indecent, and wondered that any of real sense and religion should follow them. Having therefore no scruple about the validity of infant sprinkling, I resolved, agreeable to the advice of the best of parents, and the expectations of the nearest and dearest of my relatives and friends, to dedicate my child in that way to the Lord ; I waited only for the favour of yours and their company that the administration might be as public and solemn as possible.

As I was adjusting matters in my own mind, highly pleased with the thoughts of the approaching season, imagining I should discharge my duty to God, discover the most affectionate and religious regard for my dear babe, and fulfil your desire, I met with a secret repulse from that important and striking question, " Who hath required this at your hands ? " My heart answering, " Thou, Lord," was soon smitten to silence by that one word, " Where ? " Immediately I considered within myself, That baptism is a positive institution of God—must have a positive precept or example for it—that it is a New Testament one so must be found there ; and as the subjects and modes of positive institutions under the law, were main essentials belonging to them, so no doubt are the subjects and modes of positive institutions under the gospel, and as plainly pointed out, in the New Testament. There I resolved to search for both, and found—that John the first administrator, required the subjects to " repent and believe " on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ " Jesus, who was come, though not manifested to Israel," (Acts xix. 4. John i. 31.)—that a descent from Abraham after the flesh, or the covenant of circumcision, or even
circumcision

circumcision itself, gave none any right to his baptism; for he required fruits meet for repentance of such who were Abraham's seed, interested in that covenant and circumcised, (Matt. iii. 8, 9) If so, thought I, how groundless must our pleas of right be from our descent, or any covenant-interest who are not Abraham's seed after the flesh! I also found—that Jesus the great head of the christian church, made persons his disciples before he baptized them by the hands of his apostles—that when he humbly submitted to this sacred rite, as our pattern and example, he recommended it as a becoming duty to such only as were capable of fulfilling righteousness therein; and, when he renewed his commission to his apostles, after his resurrection, and settled baptism as a standing ordinance in his church, even unto the end of the world, he plainly and positively ordered it for such only, in all nations, that are first taught or disciplined, so as to believe in him.

Pursuing my search, I found his apostles thus understood their Lord's commission, and thus acted in the whole of their ministry; first teaching the people, and baptizing only such as believed; nor could I learn that John, or the Lord Jesus, or any of his apostles, gave us the least hint that any infants should be baptized; or that it is the duty of any parent to dedicate them to the Lord in the ordinance of baptism. On which, my mind was struck with these reflections, "Then let me no longer vainly imagine baptism to be a birth-privilege—that my dear babe has a right to it because I hope, through grace, it is the seed of godly parents, or that it is my duty, as a parent, to dedicate it to the Lord in the ordinance of baptism, seeing he requires no such service. I would be very thankful God has given me such a lovely babe, would daily commit it to him, desiring it may be his, and hope I shall diligently instruct it in early and advancing life; but let my dear child be first taught, and then, as a personal act of its own knowledge and choice, be baptized, agreeable to the divine precept and the examples of thousands; but let me not dare to do that to it which I have neither precept nor example for, lest I offer strange fire to the Lord."

On reading many of our favorite Pædobaptist writers, I observed, in general, such free concessions as alarmed me, particularly Dr. Collings, that learned and evangelic writer, who says*, “The apostles practice expoundeth our Saviour’s precept, who baptized none till they believed, and made a profession of their true faith in Christ.”

Mr. Thomas Boston†, “The Scriptures plainly hold forth, That the having of the Spirit and faith are necessarily prerequisite to Baptism—The words of institution make this evident, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. “Go ye therefore and disciple all nations, baptizing them,” &c. They must first be disciplined, and then, and not till then, have they a right to baptism—All the examples of baptism recorded in the scripture, hold forth none to have been baptized but those that, before baptism, appeared to have a saving interest in Christ.”

And Dr. Watts declares‡, “Faith and repentance were the great things required of those who were admitted to baptism: This was the practice of John, this the practice of the Apostles in the history of their ministry.”

Surely then, thought I, they must have some ground for their practice, from the nature and ends of the ordinance, but here I could find none: For as it is, “the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,” I viewed it with Mr. Boston §, “Not in respect of repentance to come after, but going before; for John baptized none but those that confessed their sins” Matt. iii. 6. and he required of them a profession of their faith in him that was to come, Acts xix. 4. It is called “the baptism of repentance for remission of sin,” Mark i. 4. Peter calls those pricked at the heart, “to repent and be baptized for the remission of sin,” where it can be no otherwise understood but in testimony and confirmation of remission of sins.” Further, these scripture-phrases of “being baptized into Jesus Christ, into his death, into one body, (the church of Christ) of putting on Christ, of being buried with him into death, of being risen
“ with

* On Canticles, p. 187. † Sermons and Discourses, Vol. I. p. 125, 126, 135.

‡ Berry-Street Lectures, p. 177. § Sermons and Discourses, Vol. I. p. 129.

“ with him through the faith of the operation of God, and
 “ that it is the answer of a good conscience towards God,”
 made me think the subjects of Baptism should be professing
 believers in Christ, who are capable of answering a good con-
 science therein, and not infants. Convinced of my mistake
 as to the subjects of baptism, it made me solicitous of ex-
 amining more strictly after the mode or act itself; being sen-
 sible that all positive acts of divine worship should be done as
 the Lord hath appointed, or they will not be accepted, but
 justly charged as will-worship. Not doubting but the Lord
 Jesus had properly expressed this positive act of religious wor-
 ship, I considered, What baptism, or to baptize, signifies,
 and found the words *βαπτίζω* and *βαπτίζω* properly express the act
 of immersion, dipping, or washing by overwhelming or plung-
 ing, and the actions of pouring and sprinkling are expressed
 by different words which are never used to point out this ordi-
 nance. I observed our learned translators have not rendred
 the Greek word into English, in any one place where it is used
 to express this sacred action, though they have, in several
 places, where it occurs without any respect to this positive
 rite, rendred it to dip and wash, and in no one place to pour
 or sprinkle, well knowing it would not bear any such mean-
 ing. Besides, what our blessed Lord when he was baptized,
 said (*οὐδὲν*) Thus, so, likewise, or in like manner, it becometh
 us, &c. together with the many circumstances recorded in the
 several administrations of it, its being a figure of the death,
 burial, and resurrection of Christ, and a believer's fellowship
 therein; confirms me that baptism cannot be a pouring or
 sprinkling of water, but an immersion, or dipping in water.
 Thus was baptism administred in the primitive ages of christi-
 anity, as the learned Vossius freely owns, who thus expresses
 himself, “ It is not to be doubted, but that John the Baptist
 “ and the apostles immersed, for Matt. iii. 6. we read, and
 “ were baptized of him in Jordan; and also ver. 16. And
 “ Jesus when he was baptized went up straightway out of the
 “ water. Also John iii. 23. it is written, John was baptiz-
 “ ing in Evon, near Salim, because there was much water
 “ there. Also Acts viii. 38, it is said, They went down
 “ both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and that

“ the ancient church followed their examples, is most clear
 “ proved by innumerable testimonies of the fathers*.”
 Struck with these plain evidences, I determined to read again
 your kind letter, and diligently consider all the several argu-
 ments you recite, that have been urged in vindication of
 infant-baptism, and the mode of sprinkling, that I might con-
 scientiously dedicate my dear babe to the Lord, in the way
 you so earnestly desire me : and as I know you will not desire
 me to do it contrary to my own conscience, I send you my
 free thoughts on the several arguments you recite, not as
 yours, but as urged by others, that I may stand clear of all
 undutiful reflections.

How is it, Sir, they send us to the Old-Testament, so far
 back as to Noah and Abraham, and the covenants made with
 them some thousand years before baptism was instituted, to
 prove infants are the subjects of it ? If the New-Testament
 does not inform us who are the proper subjects, I cannot see
 how the Old-Testament should : I am sure those covenants do
 not—For Noah’s included his adult, as well as his infant-
 seed, a wicked Ham, as well as Shem and Japhet, yea every
 living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth ; yet, we are
 not to conclude their interest in this covenant gives them a
 right to baptism—And the covenant of circumcision with
 Abraham included his adult male seed, and “ all born in his
 “ house or bought with money of any stranger which was not
 “ of his seed, though unbelievers, as well as his infant male
 “ seed, all of them by that covenant must needs be cir-
 “ cumcised,” yet we are not to conclude all such must needs be
 baptized, for John the baptist refused such as were interested
 in that covenant, and had received the token of it : and the
 commission for baptism points out different subjects, even
 such of all nations that are taught ; nor was the covenant of
 circumcision the covenant of grace, for it is abolished and
 broken, but the other is unchangeable ; you own the covenant
 of circumcision, the “ privileges of it were indeed more im-
 “ mediately appropriated to the seed of Abraham ;” and you
 know the special promise and blessing of Abraham, “ I will
 “ be thy God, and the God of thy seed,” belongs to the
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children of the promise, who are counted for the seed, and not the children of the flesh ;—that it is they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham—that a carnal descent from Abraham himself gave no right to the promise or blessing—that it is not if we are the seed of godly parents, but “ if we “ are Christ’s then are we Abraham’s seed, and heirs accord- “ ing to the promise,” and have a right to gospel-ordinances ; nor do I find it can be proved, that an interest in the covenant of grace, without faith, and a profession of it, gives any right.

To strengthen their argument they tell us, with great assurance : “ It appears both from sacred and uninspired writers “ that proselytes from heathenism, upon submitting to this “ rite, and being baptized, were admitted to a part with “ them, if they brought the sacrifices appointed. The cus- “ tom of baptizing these proselytes continued in the church “ till the time of our Saviour.” I have diligently searched the sacred writers, and can find no such rite as baptizing proselytes from heathenism : circumcision only was appointed of God, and the same law was for the stranger as the home-born, (Exod. xii. 48, 49. Numb. xv. 15.) and had there been any such rite practised before or at the time of our Saviour, as a tradition of the elders, the priests and Levites need not have asked John, “ Why baptizest thou ? ” (John i. 25) nor would the chief priests and elders have been at a loss to answer our Lord’s question, “ The baptism of John “ whence was it ? ” (Matt. xxi. 25.) Uninspired writers who were well acquainted with Jewish learning, also deny there was any such custom before the time of our Saviour. I cannot forbear mentioning two Pædobaptists, who would not have denied if they could have proved so weighty an argument, as it is thought by many of less learning, for their practice Dr. Owen says *, “ The institution of the rite of “ Baptism is no where recorded in the Old-Testament, no “ example extant ; neither, during the Jewish church, was it “ ever used in the admission of proselytes ; no mention of it “ occurs in Philo, Josephus, or Jesus the son of Syrack, nor in “ the evangelic history.”

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* Theolog. p. 447. See also Exer. on Hebr. Vol. I. p. 272.

Dr. Jennings says*, “ The scripture gives us no other account of the manner of their admission into the Jewish church, but by the rite of circumcision,—It remains to be proved, not only that christian-baptism was instituted in the room of profelyte-baptism, but that the Jews had any such baptism in our Saviour’s time.—It is more likely the Jews took the hint of profelyte-baptism from the christians, after our Saviour’s time, than that he borrowed his baptism from theirs ; which when ever it came into practice, was one of those additions to the law of God, which he severely censures.—There wants more evidence of its being as ancient as our Saviour’s time, than I apprehend can be produced, to ground any argument upon it, in relation to christian-baptism.”

Nor do I think any of the learned can produce the authority of any uninspired writer more early than the Talmuds ; which were not written until some centuries after Christ, and of too late date to prove any such custom in our Saviour’s time, and too fabulous to gain credit ; yet some zealous espousers of infant-sprinkling are fond of laying this Jewish fable as the ground and pattern of their practice, though they follow it not, either as to subjects or mode : For, when it obtained, the Jews only baptized profelytes from heathenism, and the children born of them before their parents were baptized ; but those born afterwards they baptized not, but looked on them as baptized in their parents ; that, according to them, the children born of baptized believers should not be baptized ; and, as to the mode, they were so far from admitting sprinkling to be baptism, that if the entire body was not immersed in a natural current or collection of waters, or but the tip of a finger undipt, the person was not accounted baptized.

As there was no such custom in our Saviour’s time, as baptizing profelytes and their children that were born, either before or after the conversion of their parents, the apostles could not naturally conclude that their divine Master meant to include infants in his commission, “ to disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

* Jewish Antiq. Vol. I. p. 136, and 138.

“ Ghost,” as such commission to disciple, teach or instruct them, previous to baptism, is an impossibility: nor did the apostles entertain any such thought, for though they had seen him shew the utmost tenderness and affection to little children, so as to take them in his arms, put his hands on them and bless them, yet as he did not baptize these children, nor order them to do it, it would have been the highest affront to his divine authority, as their pattern and teacher, so much as to suppose him guilty of such omission himself, or neglect in giving them a plain and positive command for such a practice, and that particularly if, as Jewish children, by their birth and interest in the covenant of circumcision, or as the children of proselytes they had a right to it, or that baptism would have been any privilege to them.

If baptism had come in the room of circumcision, no doubt the apostle Paul, in his own defence, would have said so, when charged with teaching that they ought not to circumcise their children, (Acts xxi. 21.) many reasons, as well as the total silence of scripture, convince me that it did not. And if the apostles had been commanded to teach all nations, circumcising them, they would not have thought of circumcising male infants, though they had usually been admitted to that rite before, by express command, under the old dispensation, any more than baptizing them, under the New; as it would have been acting contrary to their commission, which requires the subject to be first taught. Nor does Paul, in Col. ii. 11, 12. represent baptism as “ the “ circumcision of CHRIST, or the christian circumcision; for “ that he speaks of is made without hands, by which there “ is a putting-off the body of the sins of the flesh:” It is the circumcision of “ the heart in the spirit.” (Rom. ii. 28, 29.)

The covenant of God made with Abraham, you know, Sir, was not the same with believers in all ages, nor even in the age he lived; for, you own, “ The privileges of this covenant were indeed more immediately appropriated to the “ seed of Abraham;” therefore not so extensive now to the seed of believers, as to his seed. Indeed, Peter expressly assured the christian converts in his day, that the promise was to them and their children. And Paul tells us, that he and
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the believing Galatians also were the children of promise, (Gal. iv. 28.) but I cannot conclude they were mere infants: Peter evidently had reference to the prophesy in Joel, recited above, in ver. 17. &c. where God promised the effusion of his Spirit on their sons and their daughters; so that it is plain he means by (τέκνος) children, adult posterity, or offspring, and not such as are in an infantile state, but only to as many of them as the Lord our God shall call. It would be weak indeed to think that when children are mentioned in the sacred oracles we must always understand babes or infants; and I find learned Pædobaptists own here is no proof for their practice.

Their interpretation of 1 Cor. vii. 14. "That upon the conversion of parents their children were holy, so far as to have a right to this ordinance," I cannot think natural; for the apostle is not treating about baptism or a right to it, but as some believers at Corinth, who were married to unbelievers before they believed, questioned whether it was their duty to abide and live with their unbelieving husband or wives, he enjoins them not to depart but dwell with them, as they were sanctified, or set apart to each other in the holy state of matrimony; and that if such marriages were made void, it would follow that their children would be unclean or illegitimate; but, as such marriages were valid and good, so their children, in a civil or legal sense, were holy or legitimate, the offspring of an undefiled bed. Dr. Doddridge says*, "The unbelieving husband is so sanctified to the wife, and the unbelieving wife is so sanctified to the husband, that their matrimonial converse is as lawful as if they were both of the same faith, otherwise their children in these mixed cases were unclean." And the best of interpreters give the same sense of it. Besides, the apostle by children did not mean only their infants, born since one of the parents believed, but such also as were born whilst both were unbelievers; of whom some might be adult, yet equally partakers of the same holiness; also the unbelieving husband and wife shared of the same sanctification or holiness as their children. So that, according to the forced and unnatural interpretation many Pædobaptists
put

* Fam. Expos. 1 Cor. vii. 14.

put on these words, adult infidels have a right to baptism. In short, I cannot find any such doctrine in the New-Testament, as a parent's faith giving a child a right to this ordinance. Nor can I believe Paul's reasoning is to the same purpose in Rom. xi. 16. or that, by the holy root he meant godly parents, and the branches their infant seed; for he was against having any confidence in the flesh, and knew that, by nature, the seed of the godly are no better than others; no, in no wise: the children of the flesh are not the children of God, and the many unholy branches, springing from such roots, may convince all what a forced and unnatural interpretation they give of these words; for the Apostle is speaking either of the reception, or future conversion of the Jews, of whom those holy converts then amongst them, were as the first-fruits and root of the gospel-church: or the holy patriarch Abraham, as the father of the faithful and root of Israel, and as the first-fruits and root were made holy, by the grace of God, so the happy time is coming when Israel, in the lump, and in all its branches, will be holy by the same grace, when "all Israel shall be saved." Dr. Doddridge thus expounds it *, "So would I look upon the conversion of some few of the Jewish nation, as an earnest of the conversion of all the rest; and, so much the rather, when I consider how eminently dear those pious patriarchs were, from whom they have descended: For if the root be holy, the branches are likewise so, and will surely at length be regarded as such."

The apostles baptizing three or four whole houses or households, among the many thousands baptized in the apostolic age, can be no proof of infant-baptism, unless scripture had declared there were infants in those households, and that they were baptized. As to Lydia, if she had an husband, can we reasonably suppose she would have been spoken of as the head of her household, and the trades-woman, and no notice took of him? It is probable her household consisted of servants; and to satisfy us there were no infants among them, they are called brethren, and were comforted by Paul and Silas before they departed. The Jailor's house consisted of

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such,

* Fam. Exp. on the Text.

such, to whom Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord before they were baptized, and who afterwards rejoiced, believing in God. As to Crispus, we are expressly told, "that he believed on the Lord, with all his house:" And as to the household of Stephanus, they were the first-fruits of Achaia, who addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. These whole houses or households are shining evidences of the rich aboundings of divine grace to whole families, and may encourage our hopes of the same to ours; but they afford no proof for infant-baptism. Admitting the New-Testament contains the history of about three-score years after the time of our Saviour, if the apostles acted upon any other maxim than their Lord's commission, and thought it a duty highly reasonable and becoming for parents to dedicate their children to the Lord, in the ordinance of baptism, no doubt some of the apostles, at least one of them, would have informed us upon what maxim they acted, and by argument enforce and recommend such duty; but as there is no mention made, in all the New-Testament, of any such thing, those words, when ever I think about it, still follow me, "Who hath required these things at your hands?" and my conscience will not let me do it, till I can be satisfied the Lord requires it; and I hope my honoured father will not think me deficient in the faithful discharge of every duty towards my child that becomes a christian parent.

I believe the use of water in this ordinance, compared with several representations of its nature and design in the word of God, naturally leads us to consider it as an emblem and memento of that internal and spiritual purity, which is essential to the christian character; and as this internal and spiritual purity is not partial, but total, extending to the whole spirit, soul and body, surely an immersion of the whole man in water, must be a more lively and striking emblem and memento thereof, than a partial application of a few drops only on the face. It is a most affecting emblem and memento of the sufferings of Christ, which are called a baptism, not because he had a few drops of divine wrath poured upon him, or was sprinkled with afflictions; but, as Dr. Doddridge

Doddridge expresses its significant allusion †, “ Bathed as it
 “ were in blood, and plunged in the most overwhelming
 “ distress—plunged into that sea of sufferings—and, as it were,
 “ overwhelmed for a time.” An immersion of the whole
 body, in much water, is a most agreeable emblem and
 memento of the fountain of Christ’s blood, that is opened to
 wash in for sin and uncleanness, illustrating the riches, free-
 ness, sufficiency and cleansing efficacy thereof to the whole
 person of a believer. In sprinkling a small part with a few
 drops, we lose even the idea of a washing, and common sense
 will not admit us to think such a practice a washing or bap-
 tism. And when I consider it as an emblem and memento of
 the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and of
 a believer’s fellowship with him therein; by an immersion of
 the whole body, the allusions are so strong and significative,
 that I wonder any should alter the practice. The Assembly
 of Divines say §, “ The apostle seemeth to allude to the
 “ ancient manner of baptism, which was to dip the parties
 “ baptized; and, as it were, to bury them under the water,
 “ for a while, and then draw them out of it, and lift them
 “ up, to represent the burial of our old man, and our resur-
 “ rection to newness of life.”—And we also when we are bap-
 tized, are buried, as it were, in the water, for a time; but
 afterwards raised up to newness of life. Dr. Doddridge also
 says ||, “ It seems the part of candor to confess, that here is
 “ an allusion to the manner of baptizing by immersion, as
 “ most usual in these early times.”

Your Philetus would lay no more stress on baptism, or any
 ordinance or act of worship, than he apprehends the great
 Head of the christian church intended his disciples should;
 yet, he cannot approve of and countenance such acts of
 worship he never appointed: he would not be such a trifler in
 religion, or so indifferent about it, as to prefer acts of human
 device to such as are divine; and as the manner of applying
 water to the subject is no appointment of Christ, nor ever
 used by the apostles, he cannot esteem it baptism, which is a
 sacred dipping or washing in water. Mr. Flavel says ‡,

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“ Worship

† Fam. Exp. on Luke xii. 50. and Matt. xx. 22. § Annot. on Rom. vi. 4, 5.

|| Fam. Exp. on Rom. vi. 4. ‡ Works, Vol. II. p. 133, 134. Edinb. Edit.

“ Worship may be idolatrous—in respect of the manner, when
 “ we worship the true God, but in a way or manner which
 “ he hath not prescribed in his word, but is invented and de-
 “ vised by ourselves,—the instituting of any, though the
 “ smallest part of worship, in and by our own authority,
 “ without scripture-warrant, makes it idolatrous.” Jos. Mede,
 B. D. says †, “ There was no such thing as sprinkling,
 “ or *παλτισμός*, used in baptism in the apostles times, nor many
 “ ages after them.”

I am persuaded, Sir, you are entirely satisfied, from your acquaintance with inspired and uninspired writers, that the immersion of the whole body was used in the East, in Judea, in the first ages of christianity, and your conscientious regard to truth will not admit you to deny it, though such who have read little may boldly contradict it. It certainly then was received as an institution of Christ by the apostles, and recommended to be kept as delivered and used in that country in so early times. Had the compassionate Redeemer, who always discovered and recommended the tenderest regard to the lives and healths of all men, in the least thought an immersion of the body, in these northern climates, would have been, in many circumstances, burdensom and hazardous, both to subjects and ministers, he might have appointed your supposed easier and more safe ceremony, and not have suffered this to have continued in general practice, in these parts, till about two hundred years ago, and in Russia, and other parts, to this day. Cold bathing is so far from being hazardous to the lives and health of men, that it is frequently recommended for both infants and adult; even in cases of indisposition and weakness, and to be used often too. Why should any then esteem it burdensom or hazardous to have their bodies immersed only once in their whole lives, as an institution of Jesus Christ, when he does not require any to administer or submit to it under hazardous circumstances, as to life or health? if it was both burthensom and hazardous should we not be willing to lay ourselves under obligations to some peculiar self-denial or suffering, and not, by thinking the Redeemer's yoke uneasy and his burden intolerable, forsake or change his
 positive

† Diatribe, p. 63.

positive institutions for a childish invention; because, according to the sense and usage of some Pædobaptists only, the immersion of the body is deemed an indecency. Our nobility and gentry frequent Bath and other places for that purpose; and, when suitably clothed for it, they are not charged with indecency. And must an humble follower of Christ, in submitting only once in his life, to an immersion of his body in water, in suitable apparel, in compliance with the positive command of his Lord, be charged with an indecency? This severe reflection rather falls on Jesus himself, (who, we well know, always preserved the strictest decorum) for instituting such a rite—submitting to it himself as a pattern to his followers, and enforcing it in every country, as becoming or decent, for he said, (Matt. iii. 15.) “Thus “ (πρέπον) it becometh, is decent or comely for us, to fulfil “ all righteousness.” This I know, that the decency of a human ceremony does not make it divine; nor is it decent for any minister of Christ to introduce new acts of worship, in conformity to the sense and usage of the country and times in which he lives; and it would be very indecent and ungrateful in me to esteem any of my Lord’s commands indecent or grievous. The sense and usage of the country and times had no influence on Abraham, when God commanded circumcision; he neither charged it with indecency, nor dispensed with the ceremony; but in the very same mode or manner God instituted it, and in the self-same day he obeyed. Mr. Ainsworth says†, “Herein he shewed a rare example of obedience to God’s word, not regarding the affliction, danger, “ shame, scandal and foolishness, which this action, in the “ eyes of the world, seemed to bring with it.”

In matters of religious worship Jesus never made candid concessions to the customs or traditions of the people among whom he lived, but highly censured them, as making the commandments of God of none effect, and that their worship was vain through them, (Matt. xv. 6, 9.) And as to reasons urged for dispensing with the immersion of the body, they are a full acknowledgment that baptism was an immersion. And, unless it can be proved that the Lord Jesus invested

Pædobaptist.

† Annot. on Gen. xvii, 23,

Pædobaptist-ministers with power to, dispense with positive institutions, in opposition to his express command, and the practice of the apostles, all such pleas for dispensing confirm my faith in baptism by immersion; for I would not suppose protestant-ministers to be such dupes to antichrist, as to receive a dispensing power from the pope.

The many things thus urged to prove the divine authority of infant-baptism, and the mode of sprinkling, appearing to me utterly inconclusive, I resolved to search antiquity as to human authority, and found genuine antiquity countenance no such practice, until about two hundred and fifty years after Christ, when Cyprian * of Carthage pleaded for infant-baptism, and was for allowing pouring or sprinkling of water to be baptism, not in ordinary cases, but only to such as were bedridden, or in such a weak, languishing, and dying state, as they could not be dipped in water; he does not pretend to plead for it as an apostolic practice, but only modestly declares it as his own sentiments, which he would not prepossess the minds of others with, but leave every one to think and judge as he pleased: Such it seems were called Clinicks, and in general were not looked upon as rightly baptized: It was an objection against their entering into the ministry even in Eusebius's time, and so great was the superstition of those times, that several innovations about baptism, had crept into the church, which may plead as early antiquity as infant-baptism, or pouring or sprinkling of water in the room of immersion: such as the trine immersion; giving of the baptized milk and honey; anointing them with oil; signing them with the cross; urging the necessity of it to salvation: Infant-communion was also pleaded for, of which this same father gives us a long and strange account † of his being present and a witness to a female infant, brought by her mother to them, as they were celebrating the Lord's-supper, and placed among them; that the deacon offered her in her turn the cup, but she turned her face away, shut her mouth hard and fast and refused it; upon which the deacon persisted to give it her; she resisting, he poured some of the sacramental-wine into her
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* Opera Epif. ad Magnum, p. 153.

† Opera de lapsis, p. 175. Edit. Paris, 1666.

by force, and immediately she sobbed and vomitted it up. Yet, as all these innovations are destitute of divine authority, their early antiquity have no weight with me.

As to the remark concerning the eunuch, that, “ There
 “ is no more reason for supposing that the eunuch went with
 “ Philip into the water, than that our Saviour went into the
 “ mountain, for the word is (εἰς) the same in both places.” All know, that have common sense, that by going into a mountain implies walking on the surface or top of it, and not a person’s burying himself under it; as our Saviour went not only unto, but “ went up, or ascended into it.” And that going into the water does not mean going only unto, or on the surface of that element, but that, so far as he goes into it, he will be surrounded or covered with it; and when this word is rendered unto or to any person, it certainly means within their sight, or into their presence: the nature of the action to which the word (εἰς) is applied, plainly discovers its meaning; and I can hardly help charging the learned Pædobaptists, in their criticism on Acts viii. 38. with having wittingly and willingly overlooked, in ver. 36. the preposition (εἰς) “ unto a certain water;” for which reason, in ver. 38. the word (εἰς) cannot, with any propriety, be rendered unto, but into: so in ver. 39. they are said “ to come up out of the water,” as they “ went down both into it.” This sense is so plain that Dr. Doddridge says †, “ Considering
 “ how frequent bathing was used in these hot countries, it is
 “ not to be wondered that baptism was generally administered
 “ by immersion. It would be very unnatural to suppose that
 “ they went down to the water merely that Philip might take
 “ up a little water in his hand to pour on the eunuch. A
 “ person of his dignity had, no doubt, many vessels in his
 “ baggage, on such a journey, through so desert a country;
 “ a precaution absolutely necessary for travellers in those parts,
 “ and never omitted by them.”

To say, (John xiii. 5.) Our Lord poured water unto a basin, instead of (εἰς) into, how improper! And to render Mark ix. 22. unto the fire, and unto the waters, instead of into, would not convey any proper idea of the devil’s malicious

† Family Exp. on Acts viii. 38.

ciuous and destructive design against the possessed. Nor can we imagine (Matt. viii. 32.) the swine ran only unto, but (ἐν) into the sea, or that they perished with, but (ἐν) in the water; though (ἐν) is translated with the Holy Ghost and with fire, who would ever think of rendring it with, (Matt. iii. 6.) instead of in Jordan. It would be easy to produce abundance of instances, both out of the New-Testament and Greek translation of the Old, to shew how improper and absurd it would be to render these Greek particles unto and with, instead of into and in; but as you so well know their native literal meaning, I only add what is said by the excellent Mr. Hervey*, “Every body knows that the “preposition ἐν, rendred with, is not the native obvious literal meaning; rather a meaning swayed, influenced, moulded by the preceeding or following words.—Though he “will not allow the Greek preposition ἐν to signify in, I can “prove it to have been in peaceable possession of this signification for more than two thousand years.” And, Sir, if ministers of the gospel will take the liberty, in so trifling and absurd a manner, to criticise on Greek particles, in order to corrupt a positive institution of Christ, we need not wonder the enemies of Christ play the critic on the most significant words, to corrupt his gospel.

If we suppose the three thousand were baptized in a day by the twelve apostles, it would have been but two-hundred and fifty for each; which, I think, could have been done easily by them; but it is most probable the seventy disciples assisted, which (reckoning Matthias as an apostle, chosen from amongst them, in the room of Judas) would make eighty-one administrators; and then there were not thirty-six for each to baptize; and why should an immersion take up much more time than a sprinkling? Nor can I suppose the Jews were so unused to bathing, or thought change of raiment necessary to prevent danger, as their dress was light and climate hot; for Dr. Shaw observes†, “In our journies betwixt Kairo and “mount Sinai, the heavens were every night our covering; “the sand, with a carpet spread over it, was our bed; and a change

* Letters to John Wesley, p. 26, and 232.

† Shaw's Travels, Preface, p. 11. 2d Edit.

“ a change of raiment, made up into a bundle, was our
 “ pillow. And in this situation we were every night wet to
 “ the skin, by the copious dew that dropt upon us; though
 “ without the least danger, (such is the excellency of this
 “ climate) of catching cold. The continued heat of the
 “ day afterwards made us often wish that these refrigerations
 “ could have been hourly repeated.” And, if change of rai-
 ment had been necessary, they were not so beggarly a people
 as to want, or so unfriendly as to withhold them, if any
 needed them to be bathed or baptized; especially such as be-
 lieved could not be so unfriendly, as we are certainly informed,
 “ they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all
 “ men, as every man had need:” And it is highly incredible
 indeed that they should immerse them naked. Such an in-
 decency would justly have brought the religion of Jesus into
 the utmost contempt, and strange it is, that such a thought
 should enter the minds of modest gentlemen. It is certain that
 the jailor and his family were not baptized in his house, for
 when his conscience was awakened, it is said, “ he brought
 “ Paul and Silas out:” and when he and all his family were
 baptized, it is then said, “ he brought them into his house;”
 so they were baptized out of his house. If it had not been so
 express, it is not to be thought the confines of a common
 prison, in that hot country, had no place convenient for
 dipping.

I think, Sir, the frequent allusions in the sacred scriptures
 to the custom of sprinkling or pouring of water, refer to the
 rites of the ceremonial law, and not to baptism. Those in
 the Old-Testament could not, as baptism was not then in-
 stituted, and that in Hebrews x. 22. alludes to the sprinkling
 of the blood of the sacrifices, which was typical of Christ's,
 as applied to the conscience; and those Jewish washings which
 the writer to the Hebrews calls Baptisms, if we may credit
 Dr. Doddridge*, “ consisted in different baptisms or washings,
 “ either of the whole body, or a part of it, in water, as dif-
 “ ferent occasions demanded.” And might also include their
 sacrifices, garments, vessels, &c. which were washed by dip-
 ping into water, and so called baptisms: but the ceremonies

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* Fam. Exp. on Heb. ix. 10.

of the law are no rule for gospel-institutions; and the promised Spirit, in his divine influences, prophetically spoken of in the Old-Testament, and referred to in the New, bear an allusion to the pourings and sprinklings of that law which is now abolished, and can be no reason for changing baptism into a pouring or sprinkling, which chiefly respects Christ in his sufferings, death, burial and resurrection, of which it is a most affecting and significant emblem. The seventy-two Greek translators of the Old-Testament render that passage in which the descent of the dew upon Nebuchadnezzar is spoken of, "his body was baptized with the dew of heaven," more elegant and emphatical than our version, "he was wet," as it figuratively expresses his very wet condition, by lying out all night in an excessive heavy dew, so that his body was covered with it, and as wet as if he had been dipped in or washed with it, for the dews in the East are exceeding great. Maundrel says †, "Within view of Nazareth, and the two mounts Tabor and Hermon, we were sufficiently instructed by experience what the holy Psalmist means by the dew of Hermon, our tents being as wet with it as if it had rained all night." And Dr. Shaw ‡ says of Arabia Petrea, "The dews (as we had the heavens only for our covering) would frequently wet us to the skin." The same author also speaking of the weather in the kingdoms of Algiers and Tunis says*, "Little or no rain falls in this climate, during the summer-season; and, in most parts of Sahara, particularly in the Jereede, they have seldom any rain at all." Babylon is also described, by Strabo, (L. 15. p. 506.) "to have been in the like condition with Tozer and the villages of the Jereede." So must have been supplied with copious dews, or the vegetable tribes must have inevitably perished. And as the original word signifies dipping; it appears, that both Daniel and the Greek translators did not design to express his being a little wet, by the sprinkling of a few drops of dew on some part of his body, but that his whole body should be as if it was immersed or dipped in it; and so they render that passage concerning Naaman the leper, 2 Kings v. 14. "and baptized himself." It is in our version,

Travels, p. 57.

‡ Travels, 2d Edit. p. 440.

* p. 136.

sion, "and dipped himself." They also render Job ix. 31. "Shalt thou baptize me." It is in our version, "Shalt thou plunge me." And Eusebes well knows they never use this word in the Old-Testament to express pouring or sprinkling, which manifestly proves they are different actions and so expressed by different words; and how strange is it that learned men should plead for such an abuse and confusion of words and actions.

Agitated by a strong fancy for sprinkling, our learned espousers of it would have us think the Israelites were baptized in the cloud, by distilling drops of rain, and in the sea, by the waves agitated by the winds, sprinkling them in their passage; but it is plain baptism is only spoken of by the apostle as allusive or figurative, and not as if they were wetted with water, either by dipping, pouring, or sprinkling, as Witfius observes †, "They were not dipt in the water of the sea, nor wetted by the cloud, but we are to know, First, That the apostle uses the term baptism here in a figurative sense." All the scripture-ideas confirm this; for the cloud gave light to Israel, instead of distilling drops of rain on them, and they walked on dry in the midst of the sea; and the waters of the sea were so far from being agitated by the winds and sprinkling them, that "they were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left: the floods stood upright as on a heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea." So that they are said to have been baptized only in allusion to their situation, as being under and in the cloud, and in the sea; for how was it possible the waves could be so agitated by the winds as to sprinkle those who marched in the middle, without endangering the lives of those on the outsides, as their passage must have been very wide for the expeditious march, in one night, of about six hundred thousand on foot, that were men, besides children and a mixed multitude, with the rich spoils of Egypt, and flocks and herds, even very much cattle? I think it an unreasonable fancy that has no foundation in God's word. As to the common expression of baptizing in Jordan, it more naturally leads me to think of going into and dipping the body in the river Jordan, agreeable to the true sense

† Oecon. of Cov, Vol. III. p.

sense of the word ; for who would think of going down into the water with a person ; or of chusing a place where there is much water, for the sake of applying a few drops to the body ?

Thus, honoured Sir, all the several arguments you have recited in vindication of infant-sprinkling, appear to me utterly inconclusive ; and the following considerations—That water is used in sprinkling, and what signifies such ado about the mode or quantity—It is not essential to salvation—It can do my child no harm—If it dies without it, it will be denied christian-burial—Such as think it their duty ought to do it—Or my dear partner may do it without me, though strongly urged by others, appear equally weak and absurd ; for though water is used in sprinkling, I cannot find any divine warrant for parents to dedicate or consecrate their infants to the Lord by water in baptism, any more than by bread and wine in the supper ; or by fire, as the heathens and idolatrous Jews did ; and how dare I let it be done, in so solemn a manner, in the name of the eternal Three, as I must shortly give an account thereof to God ? Neither can I find that Jesus hath appointed such a use of water as sprinkling ; but his positive command is to baptize or dip, and not rantize or sprinkle ; nor has he left us the liberty to use it as we think proper. We may as lawfully dispense with or change the sacred actions used in the Lord's-supper, or wholly omit them, as dispense with the sacred act of baptizing for a sprinkling. Under the law every ceremony of divine appointment was to be done with exactness and precision as commanded, even in the case of circumcision, notwithstanding the danger, pain and shame, they had not the liberty to dispense with the mode, and substitute some other cutting round about instead thereof.—Again, Though I do not believe baptism essential to salvation, your Philetus would not either shew a neglect or an indifferency about it, so as to have it done in a way God has not instituted ; for though he does not expect to be saved by any duty, he would be as diligent and conscientious in doing them according to the will of God, as if he was to be saved by them. Really, Sir, if I believed, as expressed by the Assembly of divines in their Confession, and larger and lesser Catechisms,

chisms, "Baptism to be a sign and seal of the covenant of
 " grace, of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and
 " that even to infants—that by the right use of this ordinance
 " the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited
 " and conferred by the Holy Ghost to such (whether of age
 " or infants) as that grace belongeth unto." Or, as expressed by the Church of England, "That therein we are made
 " members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of
 " the kingdom of heaven;" I should be as assiduous of having
 my child dedicated to God by baptism, as I have seen many,
 who have been at their wit's end lest their infants should go
 out of the world without it. But how it can be a sign and
 seal to subjects, without their knowledge and faith of the thing
 signified, I cannot understand; or the consistency of sealing,
 ingrafting into Christ, before faith, and yet denying all union
 before it. And, though baptism is not essential to salvation;
 yet the immersion of the body must be essential to the due
 administration of it.—Further, I considered I should do my
 conscience harm to dedicate my child to the Lord, by sprink-
 ling it in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as
 I could not do it in faith, but only as a human ceremony;
 and, you know, that to dedicate or consecrate children to the
 Lord, in ways he has not appointed, would be an affront to
 him, and justly charged as will-worship and superstition. I
 also fear it will do my child harm, if it should live to years of
 understanding and knowledge, as it has done me harm; for I
 was soon taught, that as I was the child of godly parents and
 dedicated to the Lord in baptism, I was, by blood and birth, a
 child of the covenant, the seed of the promise, and had re-
 ceived the great privilege, the seal of it, in my most early
 days; which had such a bad effect on me, that I looked upon
 myself as better than others—as baptized, though I am not,
 and greatly despised that ordinance as instituted of God; and,
 I know, it has the same effect on others of mine acquaintance.
 But I have reason to bless God he has convinced me, That it
 is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of
 man, but of himself that any are his children, interested in
 his covenant and promises and partakers of his grace: That
 by nature I am a child of wrath even as others, and no better
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in no wise ; and that it is in vain for any to think, because they are the seed of believing parents, they are the children of the covenant or promise made to Abraham ; for none have any ground to look on themselves so but those who are born of God and are Christ's, by having Abraham's faith.—Again, If my child should die without it, and be denied what is called christian burial, such denial will give me no pain : I have no veneration for burying-grounds, because they have passed under superstitious forms of consecration ; nor for what is called christian burial, as the form and order of it is no appointment of Christ's, nor of any service to the dead. And how true ministers of Christ can conform to it, I know not, as they own the ungodly of the vilest characters, to be “ their “ dear brethren and sisters,” and say, “ that almighty God, “ of his great mercy hath taken their souls to himself, and “ commit their bodies to the ground, in sure and certain hope “ of the resurrection to eternal life,” though they verily believe they died in their sins, out of Christ, and have no hope of their salvation ; since by such conformity they must act contrary to their own consciences—the name of God is dreadfully profaned—and the ignorant and ungodly deluded with a vain notion of a christian burial.—Further, I cannot conclude our thinking any thing to be our duty, makes it so ; for our thoughts should not be the rule of our duty, but God's word : papists have no doubt thought it their duty, when they sprinkle children, to observe many superstitious ceremonies with oil, salt and spittle, to sign with the cross ; and does their thinking so make it their duty ? Many protestants think it their duty to sign the child with the cross, and ought they to do it ? I think it our duty to act according to the rule of God's word, and to forsake all our thoughts and ways that are not agreeable thereunto.—As to my dear partner in life, I would do all I can, in conscience, for her peace and comfort ; nor hinder her from discharging her conscience in every religious concern ; but I cannot encourage her to do what I cannot in conscience do, and keep the reasons why I cannot to myself. Infant-sprinkling was her education-principle, as well as mine : she verily believed it was the duty of parents to dedicate their infants to the Lord in that way, because her
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godly parents, and so many great, learned, and good ministers of Christ pleaded for and practised it. Like me, and many others, she received it upon trust, without searching the scriptures; but now she is as much dissatisfied as I am, as she can find no warrant for any such practice in God's word; and, though I am persuaded she will discharge, as much as possible, all the duties of a tender and religious mother towards our dear little-one; yet she cannot, in conscience, do that in the awful name of God, which he has not required to be done.

In short, honoured Sir, unless you can send me some other arguments that have been urged, or form some new ones that are conclusive, I hope, neither education-principles, common custom, self-interest, popularity, nor a prevailing indifference about religion, will influence me to dedicate my child to God in a way he has not appointed; or hinder me from following Christ in his most despised ways. I will appear on the side of truth, though its espousers are few; nay, if I had reason to complain with Elijah, "I am left alone;" how forcible are right words! words of truth! A defender of the truth has no need to retreat into the filthy bogs of detraction, defamation, and scurrility, like my poor uncle CANDIDUS, who therein lost himself, and greatly injured his own cause.

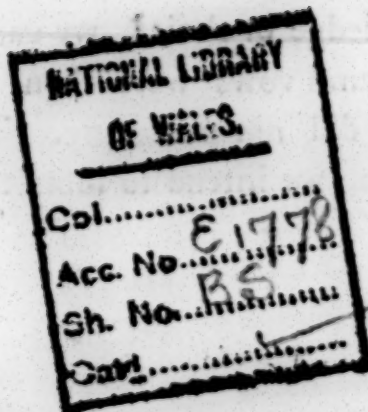
If Sir, you have no more arguments to send me, let not my submission to this sacred institution, agreeable to the mind of Christ, lessen your affection for us, as it will be from our great concern to approve ourselves to God and our own consciences, from a principle of love and subjection to him, as our supreme Lord and Lawgiver; for whatsoever he hath commanded, we would do, and be obedient in. Nor let my dear Father charge us with the hainous crimes of renouncing our baptism, and violating very solemn baptismal vows; for, our being sprinkled in our most early days, or dipped, according to the rubrick of the church of England, as it was no act of our knowledge or choice, we cannot esteem baptism, and if any very solemn vows were then made, no guilt can lie upon us, as we did not make any. Therefore instead of renouncing baptism, we intend to submit to it; and therein
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lay ourselves under the most solemn obligations to be the Lord's. How pleasing would it be to see our honoured Father, on that solemn occasion, join with us in a chearful submission to this despised rite. Once we despised it, as much as any; but now we view it as becoming and decent: Jesus thought it so—said it was—submitted to it—and enjoined all that love him, "Thus, in the same becoming manner to fulfil it." Do not let us regard the indecent reflections cast on it: for if it be vile in the eyes of men to worship him according to his word, it is more awfully vile in the eyes of the Lord for man to dispense with his acts of worship, and substitute acts of their own invention. Love to Jesus should constrain us to keep his commandments; and if we esteem baptism as one of the least, we would not brake it, much less, teach men to do so; for "then shall we not be ashamed, "when we have a respect to all his commandments." It is but little we do, or can do for him, in life, who has done so great things for us, as his real friends and sincere followers. May we be found in him at last!—With all dutiful respects,

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Your PHILETUS.

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